



**Steam clean:** A volunteer wipes down Birkenhead, a classic Newcastle-built locomotive. It was one of two steam trains to return to the north-east for the first time since leaving Robert Stephenson and Hawthorns works in 1948. Both appeared at Tanfield Railway's Legends of Industry steam gala at the weekend Picture: PA

## Storm warning as hurricane arrives

PARTS of Britain are braced today for the strongest storm in 15 years caused by the remains of Hurricane Katia. Central and southern Scotland, Northern Ireland and areas of northern England have been warned to expect gusts of up to 130kph (80mph). The strong winds will be accompanied by heavy rain of up to 75mm in Scotland and up to 20mm in the north of England. Motorists are warned to expect disruption and Scotland's Forth and Tay bridges could be closed. At sea, waves of up to nine metres (30ft) are predicted and waters are expected to top

coastal defences at high tide. The Met Office has issued an 'amber' alert. 'There is the potential for branches being felled from trees by the wind,' said forecaster Tom Morgan. 'At this time of the year the branches are in full leaf and heavier, which makes them weaker. Small items in the garden that are not tied down could also be blown away.' The gales will continue into tomorrow but should ease by the end of the day. The fallout from Katia could be the strongest storm since 1996, when Hurricane Lili crossed the Atlantic to reach Britain from the US.

## Jenson's No.1 for looks

**FORMULA** One driver Jenson Button is today crowned Britain's best-looking bloke, taking pole position from last year's winner Colin Firth. The racing star tops a list of 20 names compiled by Wizard Jeans, which asked 1,500 women to rank a selection of male celebrities. Spooks actor Richard Armitage came second, with Firth third.



## Police free men held for up to 15 years

# 24 'slaves' kept at traveller site

MORE than 200 police officers raided a caravan site yesterday to rescue two dozen men allegedly being held as slaves in squalid conditions – some for up to 15 years.

Police arrested four men and one woman on suspicion of slavery offences at the Greenacres travellers' site in Leighton Buzzard in Bedfordshire.

Their alleged victims were taken to a medical centre after the early-morning operation.

Police said they were mostly from English and eastern European backgrounds.

Det ch Insp Sean O'Neil, from the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire major crime unit, said: 'The men we found at the site were in a poor state of physical health and the conditions they were living in were shockingly filthy and cramped. We

By **Fred Attewill**

believe that some of them had been living and working there in a state of virtual slavery, some for a few weeks, others for up to 15 years.'

The five suspects were arrested under the Slavery and Servitude Act 2010 and are being held at stations across Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire.

The arrests come as a result of a long-running police investigation that suggested 24 men were being held against their will and forced to work for no pay.

Dozens of police vans remained at the site, a series of gated properties set off a winding road, until late yesterday afternoon.

A few young children played in the road running through the campsite but many residents were

unwilling to speak about what had taken place.

Mr O'Neil said: 'Because of the number of victims and suspects and the size of the site, we needed the assistance of many officers from specialist units today.'

'We are aware the operation has caused a lot of disruption to the other residents of the site and we thank them for their co-operation and understanding.'

During the operation, the major crime unit joined forces with other specialist units including the dog section, helicopter and firearms support unit, with officers from the UK Human Trafficking Centre.

Anyone with information about what has been happening at the site is asked to contact police on 01707 355798 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

## The bus ride to good health

COMMUTERS who want to get fit should leave their cars at home – and catch the bus to work. Passengers walk almost 460km (286 miles) a year to and from bus stops between their homes and offices, a report reveals today. The average of 0.8 miles each day is equivalent to

survey of more than 400 journeys across Britain. 'This study clearly demonstrates that using the bus instead of the car could enhance both personal and national wellbeing,' said Dr Lewis, of Sussex university. 'This would be of substantial benefit to the two thirds of

achieve the recommended levels of exercise.' His research was commissioned by Greener Journeys, a body representing Britain's largest bus companies, which is aiming to shift more than a billion car journeys to the bus by 2014. The group will



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